

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES FLOODSAFE PROGRAM
Local Flood Emergency Planning, Preparedness, and Response Grant

STATUS REPORT AS OF JULY 15, 2011

Background

The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality & Supply, Flood Control, River & Coastal Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) allocated \$135 million to DWR for “acquisition, design, and construction of essential emergency preparedness supplies and projects” including \$5 million for improving communication tools and processes in the Delta. Under this authority the Department of Water Resources released draft grant guidelines on March 16, 2011 for direct grants to local agencies for flood emergency planning, preparedness, and response projects. The comment period on the draft package ended on June 2, 2011 and DWR staff are now the final grant application package for release later in the summer.

Draft Grant Application Package

The draft guidelines indicate that \$10 million will be made available through 2015 for direct grants to local agencies. Of this amount, \$5 million is for communications projects in the Delta. While any California public agency with responsibility for flood response can apply for the remaining funds, the draft guidelines state that priority will be given to projects in the Delta.

Projects eligible for funding include preparation of local flood emergency plans, collection of flood information, flood response training and exercises, development of resource staging areas, purchase and placement of equipment and flood fight supplies, development of maps and resource management tools, and development of improved communications systems and acquisition of the equipment to implement them.

Recent discussions with DWR staff involved in the grant process indicate that many comments were received on the draft guidelines opposing an original “first come, first served” provision. That provision will probably be dropped. DWR staff were also aware of the proposed effort to develop a joint Delta application and seem supportive of that approach. DWR staff indicated that the final grant application package will probably not be issued until September or possibly later due to workload.

Status of Joint Delta Application Project

Initial discussions with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were held in March 2011 concerning the advantages of developing a joint Delta application for this new flood preparedness grant. Implementation of the soon-to-be-released SB27 Task Force report was seen as the basis for a joint regional application and subsequent implementation of an improved regional response system. That legislatively mandated report outlines a strategy for improving Delta flood response through the implementation

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of innovative response tools throughout the Delta and creation of an improved regional coordination system.

FEMA Region IX subsequently agreed to provide funding for a facilitator to work with Delta counties, cities, and reclamation districts to develop the joint application and complete all submission requirements. These federal funds were already available through an existing local partner agreement with the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCOA) in San Joaquin County. It was agreed that SJAFCOA would use an existing contract with Peterson-Brustad Inc. to acquire the facilitator and complete the project.

SJAFCOA staff determined that the required modification of the FEMA agreement and the Peterson-Brustad Inc. contract would require approval by its Board of Directors. That action is scheduled to occur in early September 2011. At that point, a facilitator and resources will be available to begin development of the joint application and to actively solicit participation by as many Delta jurisdictions as possible.

In the meantime, it was felt that such a joint Delta effort would benefit from having an agency representing the broad Delta to serve as lead grant applicant. This would assist with meeting anticipated grant bureaucratic requirements and would reduce the complexity of the grant application. It would also help provide a public focus for this joint effort and help project the image of a united Delta to the public. The Delta Protection Commission was asked at its May meeting to agree to serve as this lead agency and the commission Board subsequently voted to do so.

At this point, the project is waiting for the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) to forward the SB27 report to the Governor and legislature. The report has been completed and printed since March and the reason for the delay in its release is unknown. Potential project staff is waiting for final completion of contract modifications to fully initiate the joint project. This staff is continuing to meet with Delta agencies this summer on a voluntary basis to maintain project momentum. Once the SB27 report is out and project contracts are in place then work on developing the joint Delta application will proceed more rapidly pending release of the DWR grant application package probably in the late Fall. Grant awards and project contracts allowing implementation of projects to proceed will probably occur in the summer of 2012.